

## Kissinger Watch by M.T. Upharsin

### A coup threat to the Dominican Republic?

Henry Kissinger always makes a big splash in the Dominican Republic when he spends his Christmas vacation with unisex designer Oscar de la Renta at the resort Gulf and Western built for them. This year, however, the Santo Domingo headlines debated whether or not he threatened President Joaquin Balaguer when they met Dec. 26.

According to *El Sol* and other papers, Kissinger's concern is that the head of his mutual admiration society on the island during the past two Christmases, then-President Salvador Jorge Blanco, is to be tried for "corruption and prevarication." Jorge's circles filled the media Dec. 24 with headlines that if charges were dropped against Jorge, his military chief, and a disreputable local banker, Kissinger would fight to restore the island's U.S. sugar quota. If not, the nation's institutions would be destabilized and its democracy threatened, Henry reportedly menaced.

Whatever the merits of the Jorge case, the major change in the Dominican Republic is that his successor, Balaguer, has launched a war on drugs in earnest. On Aug. 27, House Majority Leader Ramón Pina Acevedo demanded in the Chamber of Deputies that there be a full investigation of why and how Jorge, as his last act in office, awarded "privileged citizenship" to the Venezuelan Gustavo Cisneros. "Privileged citizenship" gives virtually all the rights of Dominican citizenship with none of its responsibilities. Kissinger had brought Cisneros, a habitué of his Christmas Club, to meet Jorge, dangling sugarplums of "new foreign investment."

Pina's demand for an investigation, according to the island's most widely read daily, *El Nacional*, was substantiated by the facts contained in *Narcotráfico, SA*, the Spanish edition of *EIR's* book *Dope, Inc.*, which Cisneros had had banned in Venezuela. The book documents Cisneros's family links to international financial circles involved in money laundering. Its authors noted dozens of top Dominican officials scrambling to get original or xeroxed copies of it. Some, privately, saw it as a manual for the war on drugs. President Ronald Reagan requested.

The country was transformed. On Oct. 7, the police captured a plane with 310 kilos of cocaine, the largest bust in the Caribbean. The next day, President Balaguer fired the defense minister and 23 generals, apparently for their role in protecting the island's \$9 billion annual narcotics traffic. Gen. Antonio Imbert, a national hero for having shot dictator Rafael Trujillo in 1961, was brought out of retirement to build a military force not subservient to the drug cartel. He swore that drugs would be "extirpated to their roots." "All men of good conscience in the country must agree to fight narcotics traffic," Imbert demanded.

Since that shift, major cocaine seizures are reported almost every week. One plane later found loaded with cocaine was shot down when it refused to land voluntarily. There had never been serious anti-drug actions on the island, even though the migration of desperate Dominicans to the United States made it an ideal "trampoline" for drugs.

The crackdown has also hit narcotics-tolerant judges. Congress passed a law forbidding those charged with drug trafficking from being released under *Habeas Corpus* while the state was trying to prosecute them. Two judges were put on trial by the Supreme Court

Dec. 29 for having released two Colombian drug traffickers caught with 50 kilos of pure cocaine in their truck.

### The ghost of Kissinger past

Kissinger's memories of Christmas 1984 may have to do with Tom Bradley, the Amherst graduate placed in the cottage next to his at the Gulf and Western resort. Dominicans remember Kissinger's giving the blessing of the United States to President Jorge's surrender to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which has ravaged living standards and facilitated the country's takeover by the narcotics mob.

Kissinger may recall Christmas 1986 for "El Puma," the young Venezuelan crooner who sang "Let's Hold Hands" for him at Oscar de la Renta's Christmas bash and who stuck close to him the whole time, while Nancy Kissinger's name was absent from the social pages. Dominicans, however, may remember it as the moment his magic failed. The liberal daily *El Caribe*, never before hostile to Kissinger, ran a stinging front page editorial, Dec. 27, "What did Kissinger come for?" It said that many people in Balaguer's party think Kissinger should be listened to, because he is "a very influential man in the United States." *El Caribe* countered that Kissinger's influence derives from his ability to manipulate the Reagan administration, but with the administration in disarray from Irangate, Kissinger can't promise or threaten anybody.

The paper commented that Kissinger won't even give you a "hello" for free. That afternoon, *El Nacional* agreed with *El Caribe*, except, it argued, "Kissinger has been known to give 'hellos' on credit."